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To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
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Subject: Comment on proposed settlement

I am a United States citizen exercising my rights under the law to comment on this case. I believe that accepting the proposed settlement as it stands is will be a huge mistake on the part of the US Department of Justice and the 9 states who have also agreed to it in principle. In essence, far from damaging Microsoft (MS), this settlement will actually aid them in extending their current monopoly of the operating system market into a segment of the market where there is traditionally far more competition than in the general business and home markets.

As it stands, the market for academic computing at all levels is far more likely to support alternative operating systems, such as Apple Computers' Mac OS or the open-source Linux operating system. The proposed settlement can only serve to erode that competition through a means that is essentially unfair in the sense that schools cannot afford to turn away donated materials, and those donated materials will be all MS. A far more judicious version of the same settlement would be to force MS to pay the full dollar value of the settlement in cash to the proposed foundation, rather than allowing refurbished PC's and MS software to make up any portion of the value. This would give the benefit of a much stronger financial base for the foundation along with providing for free choice in a critical market. Even then, the remedy is on the light side, considering the size of MS cash reserves, which it has in large part amassed through monopolistic practices that have often seemed lacking in ethics.

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